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Jewish-Christian dialogue /

six years
of Christian-Jewish consultations

the quest for world community:
Jewish and Christian
perspectives

Published by the International Jewish Committee
on Interreligious Consultations
and the World Council of Churches' Sub-unit on
Dialogue with the People of Living Faiths and Ideologies

Cover: Chagall: detail from a window of the Hadassah Hospital Synagogue, Jerusalem: "Poised in the sky over the town and the people of the old covenant, the mystic candelabrum illuminates the tablets of the Law..." © 1975, Copyright by ADAGP, Paris, and COSMOPRESS, Geneva.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Cover design: N. Witte-Brooymans

ISBN No. 2-8254-0511-6

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Computer-Phototypesetting, Offsetprinting and Binding Stampfli + Co. Ltd. Berne

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Introduction

For a number of years representatives of the World Council of Churches and of World Jewry have met from time to time for the exchange of views and the discussion of matters of common concern. These consultations which started in a tentative and informal manner have proved to be most valuable to both sides and have become in course of time a permanent feature of the official Christian-Jewish relationship.

The 1972 consultation had as its main theme "The Quest for World Community — Jewish and Christian Perspectives". The present publication reproduces texts and summaries of the papers prepared by Christian and Jewish scholars for this consultation as well as the conclusions reached by the participants. Thus for the first time, the contents of one of these consultations — which have since been continued — is made available to a wider public.

The texts are preceded by two introductory papers which give a background account and an evaluation of the developments in this ongoing venture; it is hoped that they will help the reader to understand the new relationship and to appreciate its significance.

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the Christian-Jewish dialogue

an account by the World Council of Churches

After the second World War, Christians in Europe and elsewhere, aware of their share of responsibility for that tragedy, sought to understand what had happened, endeavoured to participate in the solution of such urgent problems as starvation, settling of refugees, reconstruction, and tried to draw lessons from the past for the future.

The Holocaust — the genocide of six million Jews — confronted Christians with deep theological questions, and with theological as well as political tasks. Because of so many preoccupations, these questions and tasks were seriously tackled only with hesitation. Moreover, in view of nearly 2000 years of misunderstanding, hatred and persecutions, any reevaluation of the Christian-Jewish relationship is bound to be difficult and often controversial.

An important step was taken by the first General Assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam 1948. It declared that "to the Jews our God has bound us in a special solidarity linking our destinies together in His design". Therefore, all antisemitism is condemned as un-Christian: "We have failed to fight with all our strength the age-old disorder of man which antisemitism represents. We call upon all the churches to denounce antisemitism as absolutely irreconcilable with the Christian faith. Antisemitism is sin against God and man."

The delegates to the Amsterdam Assembly were particularly aware of the fact that they met in a country from which 110,000 Jews were taken to be murdered in gas chambers together with millions of Jews from all over Europe. Consequently Christians and Christian churches, especially in Europe and North America, started to think about their relationship to Judaism, their responsibility for Israel,

their roots in Judaism, because Jesus Christ was born a Jew in Palestine. His teaching is rooted in Jewish tradition. We understand him better if we know ancient and modern Judaism.

Only gradually churches, Christian groups and individual Christians began to take the message of Amsterdam seriously, cleanse their liturgies and educational textbooks from antisemitism, to overcome old prejudices towards Jews as a “deicide” people, as murderers of Christ, as being repudiated or cursed by God. The condemnation of all antisemitism was repeated several times by the World Council of Churches, for example by the Second and Third Assemblies held at Evanston in 1954 and at New Delhi in 1961. Moreover, as early as 1948 not only antisemitism, but also the emergence of the State of Israel was taken seriously by the World Council. The Amsterdam Assembly did not only speak of ancient Judaism, but of Jews as our contemporaries, our neighbours; it encouraged Christians to “pray and work for an order in Palestine as just as may be in the midst of our human disorder”. “More detailed study of current antisemitism, of cooperation between Christians and Jews in civic and social affairs, in relation to a State of Israel in Palestine” was recommended.

Some member churches of the World Council think that not only ancient, but also modern Judaism is vitally related to Christian faith theologically, while other churches, especially in Asia or Africa, consider contemporary Judaism as a people and a religion with no specific importance to our Christian faith. There are many differences of opinion on this problem which had to be studied carefully after the Amsterdam Assembly. Especially the fact that Judaism is no longer mainly situated in the diaspora, but largely in the new State of Israel has given cause to difficult theological implications which are quite controversial between western Christians (Europe and North America) and even more so between western and Middle East Christians.

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Since 1962 Jewish leaders discussed with the WCC possibilities of convening a consultation of Christians and Jews. One of the problems to be tackled was the difficulty of securing a denominationally as well as geographically wide representation on both sides. Finally, 11 Christian and 9 Jewish leaders met at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, August 16–20, 1965. This consultation was organized jointly

by the WCC and the Synagogue Council of America. It was not called primarily to discuss theology, but to study common social concerns. The general theme was "The situation of man in the world today". The report emphasized that "...the Jewish people have often preserved truths of the revelations of God through the Old Testament to which Christians have often been blind... In particular Judaism has an abiding message for the Church in its stress on the revelations through the Law and the Prophets, that God is Lord over every realm of life, material as well as spiritual". It was anticipated that further consultations would ensue. It took however another three years before this anticipation was realized.

In the meantime, one expression of the ongoing WCC interest in questions related to Jewish-Christian relations was the study on "The Church and the Jewish People", jointly undertaken by the Faith and Order Commission and the WCC Committee on the Church and the Jewish People.¹ This study emphasizes that "Christians and Jews are rooted in the same divine history of salvation", that "Christian and Jewish faiths share also a common hope" (the world and its history are being led by God to full realization and manifestation of his kingdom), that "an ongoing encounter with Jews can mean a real enrichment of our faith". "Christians should therefore be alert to every such possibility, both in the field of social cooperation and especially on the deeper level of theological discussion." At this point for the first time in the ecumenical discussion the term "dialogue" with Jews is used and defined: "...such conversation ... should be held in a spirit of mutual respect and openness, searching together and questioning one another, trusting that we together with the Jews will grow into a deeper understanding of the revelation of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What form this further understanding may take we must be willing to leave in His hands, confident that He will lead both Jews and Christians into the fullness of His truth."

Unfortunately the "Bristol" Document (The Faith and Order Commission met in 1967 in Bristol, England) was not discussed at the Fourth Assembly in Uppsala 1968. However, its influence in many churches was and is nevertheless considerable. The concluding sentence of the study document led Christians and churches from talking

¹ Cf. "The Church and the Jewish People" in: *Faith and Order Studies 1964-1967*, Geneva 1968, pp. 69-80.

and studying about Jews to a new era of studying, witnessing and working with them. An International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations became the partner of the WCC in this common task. We went forward from monologue to a dialogue between Jews and Christians, although the issue of mission to Jews continued to be important in some Christian groups.

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Representatives of the World Council of Churches and representatives of Jewry met again for a consultation in Geneva, June 5-7, 1968 with the General Secretary of the WCC, Dr Eugene C. Blake, and the General Secretary of the World Jewish Congress, Dr Gerhart M. Riegner, acting as convenors. On the Jewish side there were ten participants representing various organizations and religious trends. On the Christian side there were 17 participants representing various denominations and WCC offices.

It was agreed that the meetings should continue and a small committee was entrusted with attending to plans and arrangements for further consultations. It was underlined that the common purpose would be served best by further meetings, also held without publicity.

Another consultation took place about a year later in Geneva, May 27-30, 1969. There were 14 Jewish participants coming from the USA, Europe and Israel, and 17 Christians including three observers. The main issues considered on the basis of papers were Jerusalem in Jewish and Christian traditions, as well as religious education and prejudices. The latter paper summarized the work of the WCC Committee on the Church and the Jewish People in this respect. One important remark made in the ensuing discussion was that "...descriptions of Judaism in Christian textbooks should be written by Jews".

A report was also given on a meeting which had taken place between Christians and a number of Muslims: "The theme constantly running through their deliberations had been the affirmation of the not only historical but also spiritual belonging together of Jews, Christians and Muslims." According to a report on the consultation, the conversations in 1968 and 1969 had proved most useful and it was recommended that meetings of this kind should be repeated at regular intervals.

Another conclusion of the Steering Committee mentioned the suggestion that tripartite conversations between Christians, Jews and Muslims should be organized: "Everybody knows how difficult the organization of such meetings will be and therefore no definite proposal will be submitted at this time. The World Council of Churches will explore the possibility, and if such meetings should prove possible, it may know that they will have the full encouragement of the Jewish side."

Jews and Christians met again in Geneva, February 11-13, 1970. It was the first occasion on which a consultation was made public.

No scholarly presentations were made this time, but subjects such as the WCC Central Committee Statement on the Middle East (Canterbury, August 1969) the consultation on the problem of Palestinian refugees (Cyprus, September 1969), the bearing of faith upon peace and related international problems as well as racial justice were discussed in depth. Jewish participants did not only have the opportunity to reflect upon statements issued by the WCC in the past, but could also voice their views regarding issues to be decided in the future. "Both parties ... recommended plans for more permanent consultative arrangements" and it was proposed that a small Steering Committee (five on each side) should be formed. Since then, this joint Steering Committee consisting of five Jewish members (representing the World Jewish Congress, the Synagogue Council of America, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith-Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Section of the Israel Inter-faith Committee) and five WCC representatives has been responsible for the planning and preparation of further consultations. It has also served as a liaison committee between the WCC and the Jewish organizations.

Discussion also included the bearing of faith upon peace and related international problems, the needs of refugees, development, racial justice and student unrest. Information was exchanged on relations with the Roman Catholic Church and on the forthcoming consultation on "Dialogue between men of living faiths".

In the same year, another consultation was held in Lugano (October 27-30, 1970). The theme was: "The quest for world community: Jewish and Christian perspectives". Papers were read by the Most

Rev. George Appleton (Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem), Professor Eugene B. Borowitz (Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religions, USA), Professor George W. Forell (University of Iowa, USA) and Professor R.J. Zwi Werblowsky (Hebrew University, Jerusalem).

The press release stated: "The main purpose of this meeting which is part of a continuing consultation between both groups was mutual information on common concerns. In particular there was an extended discussion on Christian dialogue with men of other faiths, a topic which will be discussed by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in its next meeting in Addis Ababa in January 1971. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr Eugene C. Blake, presented the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism and discussed reactions it provoked in religious and political circles. The chairman of the Jewish delegation, Dr Arthur Hertzberg, reported on the problem of religious liberty, especially in the USSR and in the Middle East countries. Attention was also given to the Middle East crisis and other threats to world peace."

It was decided by the joint steering group that the discussions and issues of the Lugano consultation regarding "The quest for world community" should be followed up by an interdisciplinary task force which would also study their operational implications. General agreement was reached on the major aspects of the study which should include the examining of the position of Jews and Christians in relation to people of other religions and the challenge of the new emerging world community to both groups.

Accordingly, a group of Jews and Christians met in Geneva, April 24–28, 1972, to prepare the next consultation which took place in Geneva, on December 11–14, 1972. In this book the papers of this consultation are made available to a wider Jewish and Christian public. It is hoped that they will stimulate further understanding and cooperation.

At the opening session of this consultation, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr Philip A. Potter, addressed the gathering: "I feel it is both a privilege and a delight to be amongst you here tonight in this very impressive company of people repre-

senting the two great faiths stemming from common roots. I grew up in the West Indies and we as young people felt very deeply about the plight of the Jewish people in Christian Europe. Our own history of slavery and domination by so-called Christian people has accustomed us to understand what happened to the Jewish people in Europe. There is further my deep attachment to Semitic thinking.

One of the things I learned from the Rabbis was the saying that before God created the world he created six things and among them was Shuv, the turning, the penitence, that turning which is at the base of dialogue, that turning which is also our openness to God and His will for us and for the world."

The consultation also provided an opportunity for the exchange of views about a number of issues such as violence, racism in Southern Africa, human rights in the Soviet Union, Middle East conflict, the Bible and social justice and Christian and Jewish cooperation in relation to international organizations for the advancement of human rights. Significant was the presence of a number of Christians who did not represent the white Protestant North Atlantic community. Among them was an Arab Christian from the Lebanon, as an observer.

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As already pointed out, the State of Israel has been mentioned in the Amsterdam message of 1948. Because of the different political crises it remained a constant concern of some member churches and the office of the World Council in Geneva, especially the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and the Committee on the Church and the Jewish People (CCJP). However, there was always the tension between the political issue of helping to establish a just peace in the Middle East and the theological meaning of a Jewish state in Palestine. On both issues, there was considerable disagreement between member churches. Therefore, between 1971 and 1974 a study on "Biblical interpretation and its bearing on Christian attitudes regarding the Middle East" was conducted. For the first time the WCC tried to evaluate the difficult situation in the Middle East with many Christians from different theological and geographical backgrounds on the basis of their common faith.

A consultation on the theme "Biblical interpretation and its bearing on Christian attitudes regarding the Middle East" was held in

Cartigny, January 21–25, 1974. About 30 Christian participants from the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the USA considered the way in which different readings of the Bible could influence or challenge political views.

The consultation could be considered a promising if sometimes difficult exercise in inter-Christian communication. This was the first time that the WCC had invited such a large number of Christians from different theological traditions and holding a wide variety of opinions regarding the Middle East conflict to come together. It was felt that the dialogue needs to be continued in terms of further biblical study about justice and further clarification of different approaches to the Bible, and that “these studies and conversations also need to include the participation of our Jewish and Muslim neighbours”.

A group of 50 Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Muslim men and women from 23 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America met in Colombo, April 17–26, 1974, at the invitation of the WCC Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies. The group discussed the theme: “Towards world community: resources and responsibilities for living together”. Among the participants were four Jewish scholars, three of them from Israel. Professor Shemaryahu Talmon (Jerusalem) made a presentation on the conference theme, and Professor Shlomo Avineri (Jerusalem) read a paper on “Role of ideologies in search of new forms of community”.



The World Council of Churches is grateful that the consultations between Jewish and Christian leaders have become an ongoing concern. They have opened up a new chapter in Christian-Jewish relations. Sometimes the deliberations were somewhat overshadowed by topical political problems, but at the same time both sides got to know each other better and to learn to respect their limitations. In the Christian family of the World Council of Churches there is not yet a common understanding about the Hebrew Bible or Judaism. Christians from different continents such as Africa or Asia, as well as Christians from oriental or orthodox churches continue to disagree strongly with Christians from Europe and North America. The latter also still have many differences of opinion in their thinking about Judaism and Israel. However, the insight has grown that most of these

problems have to be solved together with living Judaism, that there is no danger of syncretism, but a most valuable opportunity for being enriched both in faith and life. We want to go ahead informing each other on mutual developments including difficulties, studying together important aspects of our faiths, working together where it is possible for the benefit of mankind.

the Jewish-Christian dialogue

an evaluation by the International
Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations

I

Jewish-Christian contacts have developed significantly and in increasing measure since World War II on diverse levels and for a variety of purposes. Such contacts were cultivated between individuals, groups and organizations, and took place on parish, academic, national and international levels. The aims too were diverse: discussions of scholarly and educational issues, combatting antisemitism and racial prejudice in general, interreligious dialogue, specific matters of common concern such as human rights or refugee problems. In the latter respect, the World Council of Churches could look back on a long history of involvement in efforts to save Jews and help Jewish refugees during the dark period of Nazi persecution. Special mention must be made in this connection of the dedicated work of Dr Visser 't Hooft.

A pattern gradually emerged of contacts between leaders of some of the major Jewish organizations on the one hand, and the WCC on the other. These contacts became intensified as a result of several factors and developments. There were the Christian efforts to arrive at condemnation of antisemitism — cf. especially the WCC New Delhi Assembly. There was the traumatic realization of the full implications of the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis. There was the establishment of the State of Israel and the gamut of new problems created by it. Among these problems the more outstanding were, on the political and humanitarian level, the Arab-Israeli con-

flict and the plight of the Arab refugees, and on the more theological level, the renewed acuteness with which the unique intertwining of religious, ethnic, historical and political dimensions of Jewish (and Israeli) existence affected the Christian understanding of Israel, Judaism, and the biblical promise. To this should be added the growing ecumenical and "dialogical" climate on the one hand, and the persistence of Christian theological traditions regarding Judaism on the other.

In due course it became clear to both sides that in addition to the many contacts of national and denominational church bodies with Jewish groups and organizations, as well as the informal and *ad hoc* contacts of international Jewish leadership with the WCC, certain more regular and institutionalized modes of communication and cooperation should be established. The initial difficulties were obvious. The WCC, whilst not a monolithic body but a federation of autonomous churches, is nevertheless a fairly well-defined and structured organization. Jews, on the other hand, are not only a religious group or "denomination", but a people in a concrete historical sense. Moreover, Jewish communities all over the world are not organizationally structured in such a way that a representative delegation, analogous to a WCC Commission, could easily be appointed for the purpose of more permanent bilateral relations.

It therefore became necessary to create a special Jewish structure for this purpose that would include some of the major Jewish organizations, both on the international and national level, whose representative character or specific contribution in the field of Christian-Jewish relations was acknowledged. The basis for this relationship was established by the agreement reached in the fall of 1969 between the World Jewish Congress and the Synagogue Council of America, by which these two organizations agreed to cooperate and act jointly in the field of Christian-Jewish relations *vis-à-vis* the representative bodies of the Christian churches and notably the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. They formally established the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations for this purpose and decided to invite other Jewish bodies to join. The American Jewish Committee accepted the invitation and joined IJCIC in March 1970, while the B'nai B'rith-Anti-Defamation League and shortly afterwards the Jewish Council in Israel for

Interreligious Relations formally became members of the International Committee in 1973.

This structure did not exist when the first steps towards establishing a more formal relationship between the world Jewish community and the WCC were made.

The first attempt in this direction was made at a meeting called under the auspices of the WCC and the Synagogue Council of America in 1965, at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey. Unfortunately the international character of the Jewish representation at this meeting was limited and there was no follow-up to this conference.

A new attempt was undertaken in 1967, mainly on the initiative of the World Jewish Congress, and led to an informal consultation between representatives of the WCC and representatives of world Jewry, in Geneva from June 5 to 7, 1968. This consultation — in which 10 Jewish and 13 Christian representatives participated, representing various Jewish groups and the different Jewish religious trends on the one hand, and members of the WCC secretariat and representatives of various member churches on the other hand — took place without publicity. It engaged in a general review of the development of Christian-Jewish relations since the WCC Assembly in New Delhi 1961, and tried to define areas of common concern in such fields as economic and social justice, international peace and security, and human rights. An agreement emerged that such meetings should take place periodically and that there should be a permanent exchange of views. Without adopting a rigorous structure, a small group was set up whose task would be to make plans and arrangements for further consultations.

A second consultation was held in Geneva from May 27 to 30, 1969, and was mainly devoted to a discussion of a series of papers on “Jerusalem in the Christian and Jewish tradition”, prepared by Christian and Jewish scholars; it also discussed “Religious education and prejudices”

A special meeting was called at the WCC headquarters in Geneva from February 11 to 13, 1970, on the request of the Jewish representatives in the joint consultations, who had asked to consult with leaders of the WCC on recent developments in Christian-Jewish relations and particularly on recent pronouncements of WCC organs and of

related church bodies. The meeting was held on the occasion of a session of the WCC Executive Committee, so as to permit some of the Executive Committee members to attend. On its agenda were the involvement of the WCC in international affairs and interchurch aid; the WCC Programme to Combat Racism and its work in the field of development; a presentation of the WCC study, "Dialogue between men of living faiths"; relations with the Roman Catholic Church; and youth. The meeting adopted a number of conclusions which included an agreement on the usefulness of a regular exchange of views and the establishment of a small Steering Committee which would be responsible for preparing the larger meetings as well as for carrying out their suggestions and recommendations. The Steering Committee would also serve as a channel of mutual information. An official communiqué on this meeting was released to the press, thereby for the first time acknowledging an official relationship.

The pattern that thus emerged was an alternation of smaller and larger meetings. The former were shorter working sessions of the Steering Committee, composed of five persons from each side, meeting at least once a year and devoted mainly to exchange of information, discussion of common projects, and the planning of the larger consultations. The latter, organized at intervals of about two years, would bring together as many as 20 participants, or even more, from each side. Participants were chosen with a view to providing a wide spectrum of representative outlooks. The consultations were devoted partly to an exchange of views on questions of common concern suggested beforehand by each of the parties, as well as to a discussion in depth of a major theme based on studies prepared by teams of Christian and Jewish scholars appointed respectively by WCC and IJCIC. Thus, the consultation in Lugano in October 1970 was devoted to a preliminary discussion of "World community" in Christian and Jewish perspectives. It was decided to pursue this subject in more depth at a later consultation. Scholars from both sides met in Geneva in April 1972 and the papers that resulted from their deliberations were the subject of discussion in the plenary consultation held in Geneva in December of that year. Since then, this pattern has continued along the same lines.

II

The following observations attempt no detailed account of the various meetings and consultations, but an evaluation — of necessity subjective — of the general evolution of Jewish-WCC relations during the period under review.

1. The WCC clearly seems to take its relationship to the Jewish people seriously. The first meeting, in June 1968, was opened by the then General Secretary, Dr Eugene C. Blake, who also participated in several subsequent meetings. Similarly Dr Philip Potter, shortly after his election to the office of General Secretary of the WCC, attended the December 1972 consultation. The meetings are now held in a publicly acknowledged and befitting manner, with the Christian and Jewish partners alternately acting as organizers.

2. One of the most important results of these regular contacts was the creation of a valuable and functioning channel of communication. Questions are asked and information given regarding matters of interest or concern to the parties. Thus the Jewish side requested clarifications regarding actions or statements concerning the Middle East by WCC organs or other Christian conferences (cf. the Canterbury, Nicosia, Addis Ababa, and Beirut Conferences). The Christian side not only responded to questions but often offered information which they felt should be shared with the Jewish partners. Similarly questions and occasionally criticisms from the Christian side were raised with the Jewish delegation. Hence whatever the scholarly aspects of the Jewish-WCC relationship, it has become apparent that the "Exchange of information" item on the agenda of the joint meetings tends to loom large in the proceedings. Exchange of information not only serves to acquaint one side with the specific concerns of the other (e.g., Jewish concern with the fate of Soviet Jewry), but also potentially opens the way to possible practical collaboration the more the two partners acquaint each other with their specific activities, programmes and interests in certain concrete areas (civil rights, religious liberty, development, etc.).

3. The usefulness of these exchanges lies not only in the programmatic possibilities they open up, but in that they lead to a better perception of how Jews and Christians understand themselves. An appreciation of Jewish self-understanding led to the transfer of the

WCC Commission of the Church and the Jewish people out of the Division of Mission and Evangelism where it was first located. This restructuring, and the inclusion of Judaism in the work of the WCC unit for Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies was seen by the Jewish side as significant progress.

4. The “Exchange of information” also brought out certain problematic aspects of our relationship. On the Christian side, there is sometimes the feeling that the Jewish partners reject all criticism of Israel as hostile or even covertly antisemitic. The Jewish side, on the other hand, lacks the assurance that Israel’s right to exist is beyond debate in the Christian world. Even official WCC statements affirming this right do not allay all misgivings because these pronouncements at the same time advocate policies which seem to question that right.

5. The developing relationship reflected the growing presence of third world Christianity in the WCC. Third world representation within the WCC has given the Jewish partners a valuable opportunity to establish a dialogue with third world Christians, to get to know them, and in turn, to acquaint them with Jewish history, faith and aspirations.

6. The encounter, however, is not without its difficulties:

a) Israel, in particular, and Jews in general tend to be identified by the Third World with the West, and to be viewed therefore in opposition to the forces of liberation (the Zionist liberation struggle against British colonialism, the Israeli labour and Kibbutz movements, and the preponderance of oriental Jews in Israel — over 50% — notwithstanding).

b) The awareness of Christian responsibility for antisemitism in western civilization — so important an element in the development of Jewish-Christian relationships in the modern period — is absent in the Third World. It is seen as part of western and not Christian history. Among other difficulties, this tendency makes for a certain insensitivity to expressions of contemporary anti-Judaism absorbed from historical forms of antisemitism.

These difficulties serve to underscore the significance of the new encounter between Judaism and third world Christianity and the importance attached by the Jewish side to the WCC relationship.

7. Unlike western Christianity, in which early theological notions of the supersedence of Judaism by Christianity have given way to a more appreciative attitude towards Judaism and the Jewish people, the doctrine of supersedence appears still to reign supreme in the Oriental churches. This theological tradition presents serious obstacles to even an elementary understanding of Jewish religious consciousness, historical reality, and socio-political aspirations. It should be stressed that what is at issue for Jews is not Christian theological approval of Jewish claims but the danger of a dogmatic rejection of Jewish self-understanding as objectionable — by definition, as it were — from a Christian point of view.

8. The readiness of the Unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies to involve Jews in their multilateral contacts should be regarded as a promising development. For one thing it can help to lift the dialogue to a wider and more meaningful level where the emphasis is not so much on bilateral relationships as on the common relationship to general and objective (human, social, spiritual) realities and problems. Since this is done in a framework in which each religious tradition preserves its individuality and integrity, the overriding concern becomes that of the constructive contribution which each tradition can make in its own distinct ways and with its own distinct resources to the common future of humanity. The relationship becomes one of pooling one's resources and contributions in the joint exercise of religious responsibility.

9. This model can be applied also within the bilateral WCC-Jewish relationship. There are a great many areas of common concern and interest where Jewish organizations and WCC agencies could collaborate in a more concerted and coordinated fashion. Mention has already been made of human rights, religious liberties and developmental aid. Here much seems to depend on adequate mutual information regarding areas of concern, priorities, organizational and other means, as well as the desire to cooperate actively and systematically. (Occasionally purely political considerations may impede and disrupt — as has happened more than once — even purely humanitarian aid programmes.)

10. To sum up:

a) WCC-Jewish relations have progressed over the last years and have assumed a structured form.

- b) These relations have proved helpful in the exchange of information; discussions of religious, social and political concerns; and encounters with representatives from diverse regions of the world.
- c) The possibilities of joint and concerted action in important areas of common concern have become increasingly apparent, but have not yet been realized. This item should receive greater attention at future meetings.
- d) Scholarly collaboration on joint study projects has made a good start but would appear to be still in an experimental stage. However, the scholars' meetings and the resulting papers on the subject of "World community" sufficiently demonstrate the potential of this kind of undertaking.
- e) While the pattern of WCC-Jewish relations was gradually taking shape and becoming more institutionalized, history has progressed and the WCC as well as the Jewish representation have undergone (and still undergo) a process of structural changes and transformation. These may have repercussions on the style and substance of the Christian-Jewish relationship. It is evident that satisfaction with what has been achieved in the past must not blind us to the difficulties and complications that lie ahead. The immediate task seems to be the fostering of an atmosphere of trust and frankness which would enable both sides to face the problems of the future in a spirit of collaboration rather than polarization.

structures of fellowship and community in Judaism

Uriel Tal

*Jewish Fellowship represents the effort
to constitute a group worthy of the presence of God¹*

Only through a deeper penetration of the essential trends in the millennial history of the Jewish community will we be able to comprehend the chaotic variations of the contemporary community, all of which go back to the same original structure and still reveal its indelible imprint. Interest in Jewish communal history, true enough, is fairly universal in Jewish circles. Reformers and Zionists, orthodox Jews and Socialists, indeed, all wings of Jewish public opinion have for decades expressed intense interest in the past as well as the present of the Jewish community. An enormous monographic literature has grown up in recent decades, making available primary sources of information for many areas and centuries ... and subjecting them to close juridical, sociological and historical scrutiny. ...²

I

Our attempt to describe and define the concepts of Jewish fellowship and community is based on, and derived from, this historical research, including the vast number of studies produced since the appearance of Baron's work in 1948 by Baron himself as well as by other scholars of contemporary *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.³

¹ Jacob Neusner: "Fellowship in Judaism," in: *Judaism in the Secular Age*, London, 1970, p. 85.

² Salo W. Baron, *The Jewish Community*, Phil. 1948, (J.P.S.), Vol. I, p. 29.

³ Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages*, New York (1924),

However, the context of this essay is one of applied scholarship rather than of *Torah Leshma*, of learning for its own sake. Such an application of historical study to a contemporary concern requires the adoption of an additional method, which might help us find the common denominator that unites, or that connects, the diversified forms of Jewish fellowship and community.

The Torah around which Jewish communal life developed takes for its scope the whole of human life, its physical conditions, its personal conscious and subconscious motivations, its forms of thought and articulation and its social and political relations. The true object of the Torah, and consequently of Judaism, is the sanctification of life, rather than the salvation of the soul: "... I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your descendants. ..." ⁴

Therefore, the method most suited to our task — that is the description and definition of these communal and inter-communal forms through which Judaism tries to realize the commandment, "Choose life that you may live" — would be the religio-anthropological approach. ⁵ It is through anthropological structures, developed amidst diverse historical situations, that the intentionalist character of the Torah and consequently of Jewish tradition, has been realized. The earthliness of the Torah indicates that man is able to unfold in community both his essence, his metaphysical status as a being "created in His image," and his existence, his natural status as a rational creature.

The framework in which this process of growth, of unfolding, takes place is the one we called "fellowship and community," starting with man as a partner in God's covenant, proceeding through the family, the community, the congregation, the people or ethnic group or perhaps nation, and culminating in the world community.

1964. Israel Halpern, *Acta Congressus Generalis Judaeorum Regni Poloniae* (1580–1764), Jerusalem 1945, (Bialik Inst.) 635 pp. (LXXXVIII, Hebrew)—cf. Ben Zion Dinur, *Historical Writings* Vol. I, Jerusalem, 1955, (Bialik Inst.), pp. 19–68, Hebrew.

⁴ Deuteronomy 30:19. Cf. Maimonides, *Hilchot Teshuva*, 5:3.

⁵ Cf. R. J. Werblowsky, "Judaism" in: *Historia Religionum. Handbook for the History of Religions*, ed. by C. Jouco Bleeker and Geo. Widengren, Vol. II. Leiden, 1971, pp. 1–3.

It is this sequence of cycles in Judaism that provides sharp contrasts which often make the study of Jewish self-understanding not conducive to impartial judgment. On the one hand, the entire life-cycle of the Jew is rooted in forms which originally were intended to preserve the Jewish people in its priestly sanctity, and separateness, so that its religious truths should remain pure and free from encroachments. On the other hand, especially in modern times, Jewry has manifested a mighty impulse to merge, to integrate its life-cycle among the nations, either in order to disseminate the age-old Jewish longing for redemption as exemplified by Reform Judaism in its early days or, in a different way, as non-religious Jewish revolutionaries would have it, in order to absorb world culture and participate in it as an equal, though dissimilar, partner, frequently in terms of *Torah im derech erez*, Torah together with the culture of the world.

One aspect of the Jewish life-cycle requires separation from the world, from the nations; the other requires participation; one intends to lead to identity, the other to cooperation; one emphasizes Jewish particularism, the other Jewish universalism; one reflects a strong, nearly biological group desire to preserve Jewish distinctiveness, the other reflects the urge towards human commonalty.

II

The pillar on which the entire community structure rests is man. It is man who is the keystone of all creation, who is God's partner and administrator of His works. Man is the agent called upon to take his full share both in the completion of God's creation and in the process of the redemption of the world, in progress. Hence, man is *a priori* created as an individual. As the Mishnah says when teaching how witnesses should be admonished in capital cases:

"For man casts coins with one die and they are all alike; while the King of Kings, the Holy One praised be He, patterns every man after Adam and [yet] every man is unique. Therefore every man is obliged to say: 'For my sake was the world created.'"⁶

Yet at the same time, Jewish tradition indicates that *adam*, the individual, is also *ben-adam*, a member of mankind. This is not to say

⁶ *Mishnah, Sanhedrin*, 4:5.

that man is only a social or political being; he is an individual. But it is society, or more exactly, the world, creation, that serves as the medium through which man's religious calling is realized. It is man, collectively, who in the first chapter of Genesis is commanded to subject the earth and all its creatures for the purpose of cultivation. We learn from the prophets and then from the Sages: "... He who formed the earth created it not a waste; He formed it to be inhabited ..." ⁷ Therefore, in creating man, our Sages continue, God took dust from every part of the world so that he would be everywhere at home. ⁸ Once man's universality has been established according to the halakhic pattern, his way of life is subsequently consecrated to the realization of the Torah in the world, in society, amidst mankind. The Midrash tells us that when Ben Zoma saw great crowds of people together he exclaimed: "Praised are You who has created all these to serve me." In the explanation of the blessing he said: "How hard the first man in his loneliness must have toiled until he could eat a morsel of bread or wear a garment, but I find everything prepared. The various workmen, from the farmer to the miller and the baker, from the weaver to the tailor, all labour for me. Can I then be ungrateful and be oblivious to my duty?" ⁹

It is therefore in the world and among its inhabitants and its communities that man finds release from his initial loneliness. Hence, as Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik said: "The prayerful community must not ... remain a twofold affair: a transient I addressing himself to the eternal He. The inclusion of others is indispensable. Man should avoid praying for himself alone. The plural form of prayer is of central halakhic significance." ¹⁰

III

The first step away from man's loneliness and towards the world is taken through the structure of the covenant. The covenant with Noah is of course one which relates God to mankind. According to Jewish tradition, the subsequent covenant is structured in two forms

⁷ Isaiah 45:18, cf. *Yebamoth*, 62a.

⁸ *Genesis Rabbah*, 8:1.

⁹ *Tos. Berachot*, 7:2. Cf. *Berachot*, 58a.

¹⁰ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith" in: *Tradition*, Vol. VII, No. 2, Summer 1965, p. 37.

of socio-religious life, the family and the people (fellowship and community).

God's covenant with Abraham was with the head of a family, while the Jewish people was conceived of as a group, unique though not exclusive, from among his descendants: "... You and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant ..."¹¹

It is at this primary cycle of man's religious history that the family emerges as the root of both Jewish separateness and Jewish universalism. True humanity, according to the Sages, has its seat not in the life of a recluse but in the family circle. It is the family which generates the essential moral values such as mutual love, physical interrelationship, personal integrity and social and economic responsibility. According to the Midrash, it is man and wife together who first receive the name "Man" because only mutual helpfulness, care and toil for one another draw forth the inner, human resources of man.¹² Hence the family is the first example of communal interdependence with the merging of body and mind, matter and spirit, reason and emotion. This reflected in the two pillars of Jewish tradition: Halakhah and Aggadah.

Hence, Judaism regards the establishment of family both as a joy and a duty: joy for the individual and duty to mankind and to the world. The Hebrew Bible commands man to procreate. According to the Sages, only in the married state can happiness, blessing and peace be attained.¹³ Therefore a person who himself has founded a family, a household, in which moral and social values such as faithfulness, responsibility and love are practised, is preferred by tradition to plead for the people, for the house of Israel, before God. This is one of the reasons that it was required that the High Priest be married in order to perform the solemn rites of the Day of Atonement.¹⁴

Against this background, a Jew is one who is born, or is adopted into the family of Israel, not as often claimed, into the Jewish "race." He becomes a legitimate Jew by becoming a child of Abraham, a *ben brith*, a party to the covenant.

The initial step into the covenant is birth in terms of "existence," from *ex-sistere*, that is, of "coming out into standing," "into being."

¹¹ *Genesis* 7:7.

¹² *Genesis Rabbah* 17:2.

¹³ *Yebamoth*, 62a, b.

¹⁴ *Mishnah Yomah*, 1:1.

It is symbolized by circumcision and actualized by the first community — the family.

The second step towards Jewish fellowship and community was likewise expressed by a covenant, the covenant with Moses and through him, with the people. According to Exodus 6:2–8, God, after having heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians held in bondage, remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and promised: "... And I will take you to Myself for a people and will be your God... I am the Lord." At this point, the dichotomy inherent in fellowship and community — between separateness and participation, between identity and integration — comes into focus.

The covenant with God binds Israel, as the Jewish people, to the task of being a holy nation, separate and distinct. This separateness obliges them to fulfill the divine commandments. These commandments, however, are related not to heaven only, but to earth, to the world and its community, to every part of reality, physical as well as spiritual, to the world as creation. The very purpose of Israel's separateness, therefore, is to live in the world, bestowing form, order and meaning upon it. In order to be faithful to his calling, the Jew has to work in and through society, in and through his own community as well as through the world's community. Physical labour is not simply to be pursued for individual economic benefit alone but imposes socio-moral responsibility as well: "Idleness, even amid great wealth, leads to the wasting of the intellect (God's gift)."¹⁵ Intellectual endeavour, too, possesses a social dimension: "Learning does not thrive in solitude."¹⁶ The seal of the Torah is meant to be imprinted upon the world, its inhabitants and its communities, even upon the satisfaction of man's most earthly desires.

This intentionalist structure of the covenant has been reconfirmed in one of the most interesting forms of Jewish community in our days, in the religious kibbutz. In it, "the communal bent of the Torah" is demonstrated by the fulfillment of the laws of the sabbatical year and the jubilee. From the Torah, the religious kibbutz teaches that the individual does not possess absolute control over the main

¹⁵ *Mishnah Ketubot* 5:5.

¹⁶ *Taanit*: 7a.

instruments of production in an agricultural economy. There are restrictions on the ownership of the land: "For the land is Mine, for you are sojourners and residents with Me" (Lev. 25:23), on labour: "For they are My servants ... they shall not be sold as bondsmen" (Lev. 25:42); and on the money necessary for the upkeep of the economy: "And whatsoever of thine is with thy brother thy hand shall release" (Deut. 15:3). These commandments involve a social structure in which the means of production — land, labour and capital — are regulated, thereby removing the cause of poverty which degrades man and leads to sin, and ... ensuring that "there will not be a pauper among you. ..." ¹⁷

IV

The community is the medium for the actualization of the covenant. It is the nucleus of Jewish social cohesion, the indispensable structure that enables man to survive so that he can serve God. Without this necessary condition, without surviving in his own, unique community, the Jew cannot fulfill the commandments in respect to the relations between man and God, nor those between man and man. The key term for the concept "community" is probably that of Deuteronomy 33:4: *Kehillat Yaakov*, "the congregation of Jacob." There are several Hebrew expressions for "community": "Kahal" (Ecclesia), "Kahal Adonai" ("The congregation of the Lord"); (later the term Kahal referred to the leadership of the *Kehillah*); also "Edah," "Adat Adonai," or "Adat Yisrael." Finally, there is "Kahal Adat Yisrael" (The assembly of the congregation of Israel). ¹⁸

It is the particularistic community which enables man to practise universalistic ideas such as justice or the pursuit of peace. Maimonides said in his *Introduction to the Mishnah*: "... A man will not search for truth nor seek to do what is good when he goes off into exile or is hungry or is fleeing from his enemies. ..." Because of this vital function, the community is often called *kehillah kedoshah*, holy community. Indeed, the adjective "holy" is applied mainly to communal institutions, rarely to persons.

¹⁷ Tsurial Admanit, "On the Religious Significance of the Community," in: *The Religious Kibbutz Movement – The Revival of the Jewish Religious Community*, ed. by Aryei Fishman, 1957, p. 33.

¹⁸ I Kings 8:65; Joel 2:16; Psalm 40:10; Num. 35:24; Num. 27:17; Ex. 16:1; Num. 14:5.

While the pattern of Jewish communal life has its origins in the Biblical and Graeco-Roman period, its history becomes perhaps more significant for the study of the dichotomy between particularism and universalism with the emergence of Jewish self-government in the Middle Ages.

Throughout all this period — under the Byzantine Empire, in the days of the Arab conquest of Persia in the first half of the seventh century, in Christian Spain where Jewish self-government reached its peak in the thirteenth century, in western Europe and Germany chiefly from the eleventh century on, in Central Europe, in Italy, and then until the abolition of the Councils of the Lands in Poland, Lithuania and Moravia in the second half of the eighteenth century— throughout all these centuries and in all these countries it was the Kehillah that functioned as the main structure in which the dualism of Jewish particularism and universalism was maintained.

The privileges granted to the Jewish minority by Muslim and Christian authorities enabled the Jews to take an active part in the corporate structure of medieval societies and states. Many of the socio-political functions exercised by the state were granted to the agencies of Jewish self-government. All aspects of daily life — education, worship, philanthropy, taxation, social welfare, moral guidance and regulation, the maintenance of public order, surveillance over buildings and streets, sanitary control, the care of the sick and of paupers and disposition of the dead — all these were part of what Soloveitchik has called the “Halakhic community” which included “...the prayerful life ... consecrated to the realization of the divine imperative.”¹⁹

Thus Jewish law became a decisive factor, rather than a petrified fossil in the history of the Jewish community. Organized like little commonwealths within the bodies of large nations and exercising more or less judicial, fiscal and ecclesiastical authority, the Jewish communities were called upon to regulate the entire life of their members. To satisfy the religious-ethical demands of a highly activist and socially oriented creed, leaders had to pay special attention to moral conduct even in domains today considered strictly secular in nature. The Jewish judiciary was resorted to not only by litigants in economic or

¹⁹ Soloveitchik, *Ibid.*

domestic disputes, but also by agencies seeking protection for the underprivileged or raising similar issues of social importance.²⁰

With the disappearance of medieval communal forms from western society, there was little scope left for autonomous Jewish corporate bodies. With the advent of modern emancipation, the Jew, too, was integrated into the open-class stratified structure of modern life. As the principles of liberty of conscience and of equality of rights were realized, the Jew, too, tried to reshape his communal tradition. Moreover, since the Christian denominations, especially in Protestant countries, had abandoned many political features characteristic of the medieval Church, many partisans of emancipation expected the Jewish religion to be purified of secular ingredients, and confine its activities to worship, religious education and charity.²¹

However, the Jewry in the state of Israel today and much of Diaspora Jewry both refuse — with a stubbornness which is not always admired by the Christian world — to accept the interpretation of equality in terms of uniformity. Equality, in the Jewish interpretation, means the equal right to maintain socio-religious selfhood amidst human unity — in other words, to maintain the dual principle of separateness and participation.

V

At first glance, since the fulfillment of the seven Noahide commandments opens the gate to God for “whoever wants to enter,”²² it would appear that the attitude of Judaism to the nations should be a simple and open one, as is claimed by Jewish apologists. Indeed, many sayings of the Sages, of philosophers or theologians would sustain this interpretation. An old rabbinic legend, which is also reflected in the New Testament miracle of Pentecost, relates that the decalogue was uttered in seventy tongues of fire to reach the known seventy nations of the earth.²³ Similarly, we learn that when the people entered Canaan the words of the Law were engraved in seventy languages on the stones of the altar at Mount Ebal.²⁴

²⁰ Baron, Vol. I, p. 85; Vol. II, p. 291.

²¹ *Idem*, Vol. I, pp. 4, 8.

²² *Exodus Rabbah*, 19:4.

²³ *Shabbath* 88b., *Exodus Rabbah* 5:9, *Tanchuma Shmot* 22, *Midrash Tehillim*, cf. Acts 2:6.

²⁴ *Sotah* 35,6.

Yet it seems that an objective, truthful definition of the relationship of Judaism to the nations indicates a much more complex attitude. The very duality we call "separateness and participation" or "identity and integration" or "particularism and universalism," comes to a head here, in the relationship of Judaism to the world and its communities.

On the one hand, since earliest Biblical times, there has been a tendency to relentlessness and to harshness especially when the pure worship of Israel's one and holy God was endangered. The Book of the Covenant forbade any alliance with idolatrous nations, and the Deuteronomic Code made this more stringent by prohibiting inter-marriage or even the toleration of idolators in the land, lest they seduce the people of God to turn away from Him. In the eyes of the prophets too the heathen nations were looked upon as embodiments of evil, idolatry, violence, impurity, as centres of arrogance and pride denying God. Thus they were doomed to perdition because they opposed the sovereignty of God proclaimed by Israel.²⁵

The Pharisees went still further by placing an interdict upon eating with the heathen or using food or wine prepared by them, thus hoping to achieve separation from the non-Jewish world.²⁶ The law in principle did not tolerate those heathens who engaged in idolatrous practices and refused to observe the seven Noahide laws, the laws of humanity: "Thou shalt show them no mercy" was the phrase used with regard to the seven tribes of Canaan as for all other idolators.²⁷ Hence Maimonides set down the rule that "wherever the Mosaic law is in force the people must be compelled to abjure heathenism and accept the seven laws of Noah or else they are doomed to die."²⁸

These ancient roots, as well as the historical experience of Judaism under both Christian and Muslim regimes, the recent memory of the Holocaust and the ever present warfare in the Near East will all perhaps help to explain the recent hardening of attitudes which can be discerned among quite a number of Jews and Israelis.

On the other hand, in the code just cited, Maimonides also says

²⁵ Ex. 23:32; Deut. 7:2, 20:16ff.; Is 60:12; 63:6; 66:14f; Zech. 14:2f; Joel 4:9-19; Jer. 10:25; Ps. 9:16, 18, 20; 10:17.

²⁶ *Shabbat* 27b.

²⁷ *Deuteronomy* 7:3; cf. *Sanhedrin*: 57a-59b.

²⁸ Maimonides, *Hilchoth Melachim*, 8:9-10.

“... Not only the Jewish tribe is sanctified by the highest degree of human holiness, but every human being, without difference of birth, in whom is the spirit of love and the power of knowledge to devote his life exclusively to the service of God, and the dissemination of this knowledge, and who walking upright before Him, has cast off the yoke of the many earthly desires. ... God is his portion and his eternal inheritance. ...”²⁹ Just as the exclusive attitude to the nations is rooted in the teachings of the prophets and Sages, so is this opposite, peaceful and universalistic attitude to the nations an integral part of the Jewish tradition and an obligating heritage for contemporary Jewry.

The book of Jonah testifies that Israel's God sent His prophet to the heathens of Nineveh to exhort them to repentance, that they might obtain forgiveness and salvation.³⁰ Similarly, according to our Sages, a non-Jew who studies and observes the Torah is equal to the High Priest, for when the Scripture says: “The laws which a man fulfills, he shall live by them” it implies that the practice of pure morality is the one essential required by God.³¹

Just as the tradition of exclusiveness contributed to bitter feelings and harsh attitudes towards the nations, the tradition of inclusiveness contributed to a growing openness, to an increasing pursuit of peace so that justice could be achieved between Israel and the nations.

VI

The Torah, beginning with creation, teaches that there is no aspect of human life, of being, which can be regarded as outside the realm of religion. Hence Judaism is realized throughout man's entire life-cycle by his physical and spiritual growth through the covenant, the family, the congregation, the community, voluntary associations, peoplehood, ethnicity (or, for some, nationality and statchood) into the world and its communities.

Thus, Jewish existence requires adequate conditions for the unfolding of this religio-anthropological structure. Indeed, it seems that much of the history of the Jews among the nations can be understood as a continuing attempt to safeguard these conditions. Since a pluralistic

²⁹ Idem., *Hilchoth Shmittah Veyovel*, 13:13.

³⁰ *Jonah* 3:4.

³¹ *Midrash Tehillim*, Ps. 1:1-2.

social structure offers more chances for the free unfolding of the potential of a person or a people, Judaism supports pluralism and opposes imposed uniformity.

This pluralistic structure, since it is derived from understanding the totality of creation, is not confined to safeguarding Jewish separate existence, but rather comprises the world and its communities as well. According to the Jewish creed, redemption has not yet come; no attempt is made to reconcile diverse religions. Judaism does not accept Christianity or Islam, nor does it demand of other religions that they embrace Judaism. It is precisely this "stiffnecked" insistence upon being itself that makes Judaism aware of the universal equal right to be different.

particularity and universality: a Jewish view

Shemaryahu Talmon

1. The twin concepts of particularity and universality have been differently interpreted throughout history not only by Judaism and Christianity, but also by diverse social and political ideologies. It is inevitable that the religious interpretation of these concepts which do not pertain exclusively to the domain of religion, always have been and still are affected by moods, modes and attitudes which prevail in the socio-political dimension. In our own generation, although not exclusively, the dichotomy of the two concepts has hardened into full-fledged opposition. More often than not, particularity and universality are viewed as two mutually exclusive frames of mind and ideological pursuits.

2. Whereas Judaism emphatically rejects the presentation of particularity and universality as mutually contradictory, Christianity on the whole is prepared to subscribe to this definition. The expectation of a future perfect equality of men in the kingdom to come creates in believing Christians a consciousness of mutual obligation and a sense of solidarity within the framework of a constituted community — the Church as Corpus Christi. The individual and the community are called upon to prepare the way for the realization of the all-embracing future society by progressively foreshadowing it in actual history.

The ideal picture implicitly and explicitly presupposes the ultimate conversion of all mankind to the one and only faith, the universal

religion of humanity, Hegel's "absolute religion". No other social affiliations and configurations are required, nay permitted, to mediate between the individual and the ultimate unity which is the Church. The community of the Church is world community.

This universalist ideology, based upon the concept of election, is pregnant with the hybris of self-righteousness to no lesser degree than a particularistic conception of chosenness. Being grounded in the lofty vision of a united mankind, direct universalism easily can generate contempt for individuals and groups that have not seen the light. Since this type of universalism is conceived of as the only legitimate way leading to salvation of mankind — *nulla salus extra ecclesiam*, its proponents may feel entitled, even enjoined to use not only missionary persuasion but also crass coercion to impose this universalism on the recalcitrant.

Any opposition which hinders the realization of what is taken to be "objective" universalism must be vanquished, since, almost by definition it surely emanates from stubborn "subjective" egotism. Individuals and groups who insist on remaining outside the structure of this "particularistic universalism" may again have to face, as they did face in the past, the danger of annihilation.

3. A prevalent ideological tendency, voiced preponderantly by western liberals, which advocates the abrogation of any sort of institutionalized borders and limitations in the realm of socio-political organization, coalesces with the above universalist persuasion of Christianity, notwithstanding the quite different underlying motivations. The resulting universalism, self-styled "progressive", instinctively rejects and actively militates against insistence of collectivities on the right to cling to their particular identities. Judaism presents an altogether different ideology, perpetuating as it does, its historically specific beliefs and customs, underscored by the reconstitution of Israel as a separate political entity. This actual particularity is decried by universalists as the expression of objectionable religio-political parochialism. The confusion of "particularity" as an actuality with "particularism" as a normative concept in respect to Judaism, necessitates a renewed analysis of these issues and their respective roles in the system of ideas of Judaism.

4. It must be stated from the outset that the presentation of the matter is beset by severe limitations: Judaism is not monolithic in the

interpretation of its own heritage. In the present context, it would be impossible to do justice to the diverse nuances, some varying even on principles, which can be discerned in the discussion of the issue under review within Jewry. What is more, the interpretation of particularity and universality and of the relative roles which they are assigned in the overall framework of Jewish thought, to a large degree is directly dependent on specific historic situations. The variations in emphasis by successive generations of Jewish thinkers often is the direct result of external politico-religious conditions to which Jews reacted. These reformulations of the concepts of particularism and universalism determine, to a great measure, the Jewish attitude towards the surrounding world. It follows that in an attempt to present the essence of Jewish particularity and universality, selection is imperative. One can only hope to recapture the essential aspects which should guide Jewish thinking in this matter, although historical reality may diverge from them, as indeed it sometimes did and still does, and even flagrantly flout the principles distilled from basic normative Jewish sources.

“Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow.”¹

5. Both Jewish particularity and the universalist thrust of Judaism are grounded in the biblical world of ideas. It is from there that any discussion of these two aspects within the orbit of Judaism must take its departure.

From its very inception, biblical thinking affirms “particularity” as a *universal empirical fact*, and “universalism” as a *value*, the particular goal of Israel’s singular monotheism. The particularity of the individual expresses itself not in solitude or in “oneness” — God alone is “one” — but rather in diverse crystallizations of collective specificity: family, clan, tribe, credal community, people, nation, and freely contracted fellowship. Judaism strives to give validity to the fragmentary life of the individual *via* the projection of social structures, thus saving him from direct unmitigated confrontation with an

¹ T. S. Eliot, “The Hollow Man”, in *Collected Poems*, London: Faber & Faber, 1966.

impersonal universal society. The self is thus the touchstone by which to measure altruistic relationships: love for thy neighbour should equal love for thyself. Raised to the societal level, and applied to intergroup relationships, this precept makes collective specificities and particular identities the cornerstones of all general and universal structures: "The ideal of the religion of Israel was society in which the relations of men to their fellows was governed by the principle 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'."²

6. "Particularity" and "universalism" are complementary, not mutually exclusive. This almost axiomatic statement obviously causes difficulties when it is applied to actual life situations. Here, the problem of relating the principle to the specific arises in full force. There is, on the one hand, the danger of judging actualities in their relativity by visionary absolute standards. On the other hand, expediency often causes the ideal to become subjected to short-range considerations of practicability. "It is true", says Martin Buber, "that we are not able to live in perfect justice (let alone, in perfect love, S. T.), and in order to preserve the community of men, we are often compelled to accept wrongs in decisions concerning the community. But what matters is that in every hour of decision we are aware of our responsibility and summon our conscience to weigh exactly how much is necessary to preserve the community, and accept just so much and no more."³ Practical morality, as understood in Judaism, grasps both these complementary aspects of social-reality, and works at relieving the inevitable tension between them. Fully recognizing the deficiency of our historical world, Judaism acquiesces in the knowledge that an ideal structure of human society can be achieved only at the "end of days". However, the awareness of the limitations of collective life on all levels in the historical world, is not an attitude that breeds inertia. From its inception in biblical days to the present day, Judaism has grappled with internal and external problems arising from the tension between different collectivities, adjusting the ways and means of dealing with them to the particular needs of the specific historic situations. The validation of history generates in Jews a readiness to reinterpret their heritage and to respond self-critically

² George Foote Moore, "Judaism", in *Historia Religionum*, eds. C. Jouco Bleeker & Geo Widengren; Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1971, Vol. II, p. 156.

³ Martin Buber, "Hebrew Humanism", in *Israel and the World*, New York, Schocken, 1971, p. 246.

to new conditions and new challenges. This stance can be fruitfully utilized in the redefinition of basic Jewish concepts in the context of the present deliberations: the search for a better world order.

7. In this context it would appear that a redefinition of the idea of "election" becomes imperative. Notwithstanding the centrality of the idea of "the chosen people", a concept which was assimilated by Christianity to itself, the underlying persuasion that distinctiveness necessarily equals "distinction" clashes with the basic convictions of equality inherent in the projected world order. As a concept of superiority, rather than differentness and service, the doctrine of chosenness must be rejected by Jewry since it implies the unacceptable notion of automatically preferential status of the Jewish collectivity before the Creator *vis-à-vis* other credal and ethnical collectivities. In a world society founded on the inherent equality of all men, the term "chosen" as implying moral superiority, can only be legitimately conferred upon a collective by others, if this group has shown itself to be worthy of such distinction by its exemplary mode of life.

8. The synchronic extension of the individual into the collective, is complemented by the diachronic extension. Man in his collectivity spans the gap between preceding and future generations. The collective thus affords to the individual the security of continuity beyond his own circumscribed life-span. Historical consciousness arises from collectivity, and at the same time undergirds and strengthens collectivity. It helps overcome the fragmentariness of mankind which may lead to forlornness, and ultimately to destructiveness. The certainty of being a link in the chain of generations encourages the perpetuation of transmitted values. The knowledge that one is enjoined to transmit these values in ever-changing circumstances to generations to come, makes for a readiness to reinterpret them in the light of new experiences. The ongoing reshaping of inherited values opens up in Judaism a readiness to apply these values to wider collectivities.

9. In summarizing the basic tenets of Judaism with respect to the "particularity"- "universalism" dichotomy, it may be said that Judaism recognizes particularity as an undeniable principle of human existence. Judaism further confers a spiritual dimension upon actual particularity, as experienced in all life situations, by conceiving of it as divinely decreed: it is a basic phenomenon of the human condition since the days of creation — naturally, anthropologically, ethnically,

socially and politically. Particularity implies diversity and, to a certain degree, separateness of men, under the unifying overlordship of the Creator who reigns supreme over all mankind. Judaism affirms the resulting diversity in the realm of the human spirit. It recognizes the multiformity of the religious experience, and of its expression in various and varied cultic practices, as a reality of human history. Freedom of choice in matters spiritual is considered the inalienable right of all men as individuals, and as members of specific collectivities, i. e. of socio-religious communities.

10. In actual history, as a result of man's sins, positively viewed specificity degenerated into divisiveness. The processes by which the separateness of individuals and of species and the particularity of groups deteriorated into inimical competition and hatred, are portrayed in the Bible in a series of episodes set in the antediluvian and the pre-Hebrews eras. The Adam/Eve-Snake enmity (Gen. 3:14-15) typifies man's separation from other species; Cain's fratricidal killing of Abel symbolizes the erosion of individuality into egotistic rivalry anthropologically (*ib.* 4:3 ff.). Not only does human divisiveness result from particularity gone awry but according to the biblical narrative also from a wrongly conceived universality. This is exemplified in the episode of the Tower of Babel. Until then "all the world spoke one language and used the same words" (or possibly "had common purposes"). Excessive "oneness" generated hybris towards the only "one", God the Creator, and was punished by the divisive scattering of mankind which characterizes the human condition until the "end of days". Historical divisive particularity is viewed as the hiatus between the divinely established concerted diversity at the time of creation, and the reconstituted composite unitedness of man and beast, of nation and nation, at the time of the "latter days".

11. Judaism has set up "universalism" as the ultimate goal towards the achievement of which mankind should direct its efforts. All men and all peoples are exhorted to place their hopes in the vision of "the latter days" — a cosmic situation when the historical-existential tension between particularity and universality finally will be allayed. The universe again will be peacefully shared by all under the just guidance of the Creator to whom all peoples will pay homage. As in the initial, i. e. pre-historical era, so in the latter stages of human history,

universality will be realized in the accord of species and specificities, and not in the abolition of particularities — anthropological, credal and socio-political. Israel's universalist vision expresses itself in the unison of particular men and particular people who worship the "one most high" in the manifold hypostizations of the Deity. Israel will remain, indeed, God's *am segulah*, his "particular" (AV:peculiar) people (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14-2; 26-18 and Mal. 3:17). But by the same token such a special position and relationship is granted to each and every people in the context of its own faith: "Each man shall dwell under his own vine, under his own fig tree undisturbed, for the Lord of Hosts himself has spoken. All peoples will (or may) walk, each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever" (Micah 4:4-5). Judaism holds out to the nations *salus extra synagoram*.

12. In this context, the Jewish perception of life in society as being based upon a definite code of legal prescriptions and injunctions gains special importance. The interaction of individuals and of social bodies must be regulated by divinely proclaimed and normatively expounded statutes which affect all mankind, although to varying degrees. Jewish universalism is grounded in a legal basis which is shared by all humanity: the seven Noahide laws which are the seven pillars of human coexistence. Jewish particularity is revealed in the superstructure of commandments and laws which define the specificity of Judaism. In the ideal "Commonwealth of nations", peoples will voluntarily subject their sovereign will to the persuasive power of the Divine Judge (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4). Divine justice will become manifest in the Israelite religio-cultural body politic under the just leadership of the Israelite king (Is. 11:1-5). The regulative force of the Divine and the human-royal adjudication will overcome all divisiveness which arose from improperly understood particularities internally between Judah and Ephraim (ib. 11:12); externally, between Israel and the nations (ib. 19:24-25) and between nation and nation — their specificity unimpaired.

In this biblical vision unfolds, in the purest and most concentrated form, Israel's conception of "world community" as a "community of communities". Between the particular subjective level of individual human existence and the universal-objective realm of world-community, Judaism posits the non-universal but trans-subjective character of the group, irrespective of its nature or definition.

the quest for world community based on the resources of other groups

Norman Lamm

1. The effort to achieve world community, as a voluntary pluralistic entity rather than as an imposed uniformity, raises a particularly sensitive question — one amongst many — to which each participant in the endeavour must essay his own answer. That question is: How can we understand and work together with communities of other religions and ideologies in their quest for a world community based on their own resources? This paper is an effort to formulate a Jewish response to this challenge.

2. It is a truism that Judaism has often interacted with contemporary civilizations, and cultural borrowing is a fact of history which requires no documentation. Yet with Judaism, such borrowing as did occur was largely unconscious. Deliberate imitation was explicitly proscribed. “Neither shall ye walk in their statutes” (Lev. 18:3) was taken as a general prohibition of pagan practices and became a major source of Judaism’s strictures against non-Jewish ritual and mores. To speak, therefore, of cooperation with other faith communities on the basis of their own resources, poses an immediate dilemma.

3. There is an inherent danger in the whole enterprise that we have labelled “the quest for world community.” It may, if we are not on our guard, result in committing one of three fundamental errors.

The first of these is the possibility that “world community” will become a euphemism for what can only be called religious and ideological imperialism, whether conscious or unconscious. If our goals are largely identical, why not adopt my methods?

The second is the imposition of a kind of apologetic straitjacket on individual philosophies, frequently distorting them in the course of striving for preconceived conclusions acceptable to others. Jewish thought has too often suffered from this wilful if well-intentioned distortion.

Third, one must beware of falling into the trap of a theological indifferentism which regards theological and cultic exclusiveness as retrograde and reactionary. If, according to this doctrine, all that counts is the ultimate desideratum — whether that be a moral principle or ethical conduct or belief in a supernatural god or religious experience — and all the various methods of reaching that goal are of little impact, then our problem is no problem; but then too, our Judaism is no Judaism, and we have no right to speak in its name.

4. However, the biblical prohibition against cultic promiscuity, especially as it was expanded by the Rabbis, cannot and need not be taken as an assertion of the total self-containment of Jewish teaching and a denial of validity to any and all non-Jewish wisdom. That there have been such introversionist, centripetal, and exclusivist tendencies in the history of Jewish religious thought and life cannot be denied; but the tradition speaks with other voices as well.

One finds, in general, a more open attitude in the earlier sources of the Rabbinic tradition than in the later ones. We may accept as normative, I believe, the Midrashic dictum: "If someone tells you that the nations of the world possess wisdom, you may believe him; that they possess Torah (read: religious truth), do not believe him" (Lam. R. 2:13).

One can cite a whole roster of examples from the medieval Sephardic authorities to illustrate the receptivity of Judaism to the insights of others when such insights are not in conflict with basic Jewish thought. Maimonides, whose name is the first to come to mind in this respect, explicitly taught, "accept the truth, no matter what its source" (introduction to his "Eight Chapters"). And Don Isaac Abravanel, somewhat later, was not averse to quoting Christian exegetes and sometimes preferring their interpretations of Scripture over those of the Jewish commentaries.

5. One must, of course, make a clear distinction between cultic practices and intellectual insights. Whatever else the terms *hokhmah*

(wisdom) and *Torah* may mean (in the Midrashic passage cited above), they do differentiate between the realm of particularistic cult and universal knowledge. Jewish ritual practice is "private," normative, and specific, and hence should be guarded against infusion of non-Jewish religious forms. But cult and culture are by no means identical. Human culture and civilization have broad universal aspects in which all human beings share by virtue of their very humanity; hence, the Noahide laws as the common heritage of all mankind. The Sages of the Talmud were not averse to holding up certain contemporary pagan nations as exemplars of particular moral behaviour which they considered worthy of imitation (see BT, *Ber.* 8b).

6. Judaism imposes on its members a normative code of conduct, yet it cannot be considered monolithic in its insights and values. It exhibits paradoxes, and, often, opposing principles. The Halakhah itself, the very expression of Judaism's quest for essential uniformity in moral and ritual behaviour, is often arrived at as a result of the clash of and interplay between conflicting rules, principles, and values. One may thus find elements in Judaism which articulate well with insights of other faiths or secular ideologies. To cite but one example, Judaism knows of both quietistic and activist streams in its tradition. It may find resonance for its quietistic dimensions in certain eastern religions, and its activism certainly corresponds to that of modern, secular technological culture. The presence of such polarities and ambivalences within the Jewish tradition allows us, as committed Jews, to work cooperatively towards world community with others who espouse any one side of such views and are seized of one aspect of such polarities, without our necessarily adopting the whole context of these insights or subscribing even to that one particular view for ourselves.

7. One further caveat is in order in formulating a Jewish response to this challenge of working towards world community with others on the basis of their own particular resources. The attempt to assign to other religions an anticipatory messianic role in the redemptive conception of history (e.g. Jewish versions of the concept of *preparatio evangelica*) should not serve as a legitimation of our goals. Judaism can no more use Christianity than Christianity can use Judaism by virtue of this argument. Furthermore, this argument is confined to

one or two historical religions – Christianity and Islam – and says nothing about all others, especially non-western religions.

8. In view of what has been said thus far, we must now formulate the *modus operandi* for such a cooperative quest for world community, and here two points need to be made.

First, a guiding principle should be that while every religion and ideology draws upon its own indigenous resources in order to formulate its insights, attitudes, and doctrines on world community; and while these resources should be respected and peculiar modes of hermeneutics and exegesis accepted as valid for that group; the other religions and ideologies joining in the quest for world community should consider only the conclusions, and not the resources and methods, in devising means for working cooperatively towards world community.

An example of the above may be cited from resources of Judaism. A law or a generally sanctioned approach to non-Jews may be a basic *halakhah* with pronounced universalistic and humanistic emphasis, or it may turn out to be of sufficiently broad scope only as a result of certain correctives that the halakhic method supplies, such as the principle of *kiddush hashem* or *darkei shalom*. How we arrive at such conclusions is irrelevant to other groups; *which* resources we use is only of academic interest to them. Of real and effective significance are only the specific *conclusions* at which we arrive.

9. The second point is far more difficult to attain, because it obligates all participants to a form of collective self-restraint. Many religions, especially western religions and certain ideologies possess, to varying degrees, dreams of universal acceptance, whether by force or by conviction. The utopian views of Christianity and Islam have traditionally envisioned the ideal state of mankind as the embracing by all humans of their respective prophets or dogma. Judaism, at the very least, looks forward to the obliteration of idolatry, and the universal acceptance of the One God. Marxism strives for domination by the proletariat and the establishment of a classless society based on its dialectical materialism. If such ultimate aims are denied, we are false to these individual outlooks.

How, then, can Christianity achieve genuine world community with Jews, when it desires all Jews eventually to accept Jesus? How shall

Moslems work with Christians when the goal of Islam is the universal acknowledgment of Mohammed? How shall Jews cooperate in world community with religions which they traditionally consider idolatrous? And how shall the materialistic Marxist achieve genuine cooperation with any of the above, when he sees them as obstacles to the realization of his utopian vision?

It is here, perhaps, that all religions and ideologies may have to be called upon to make a clear decision, in common, in order to proceed both honestly and honourably on the quest for world community. That is, that having openly acknowledged its eschatological goals, each group must affirm that our contemporary mutual quest for world community is non-eschatological or, at worse, pre-eschatological. Allied with this must come a resolve that even if world community represents, according to one's insights and orientation, a pre-eschatological state, such world community must never become the instrumentality for activist eschatological realization, and the proselytization that it implies.

That is admittedly asking a great deal from those communities for whom the achievement of the *eschaton* is an essential doctrine and effective motivation of conduct. But unless such self-restraint is forthcoming, and unless it is forthcoming in a manner that will inspire trust by others, the quest for world community will be bedevilled by mutual suspicion and will die while being born.

universality and particularity

summaries of five contributions

Ellen Flesseman-van Leer

The five papers by Christian theologians presented and discussed at the consultation on "The quest for world community — Jewish and Christian perspectives" fall into two groups. The papers by Martin-Achard and Dumas deal with the teaching of the Bible. The others, by Tolen, Weth and Stendahl respectively, address themselves more directly to the general conference theme. All three in fact grapple with the same problem of universality and particularity. That is hardly surprising

A preparatory meeting, in April 1972, had defined the world community we are in search of as a community in which the identity of each group will have its proper place. Given that understanding of world community, shared now by all the participants of this consultation, the question of the relation between universality and particularity will necessarily loom large. Yet beyond this common denominator the differences between the three papers are considerable. The writers were allotted somewhat different subjects, to be sure, but there are also striking differences in their points of view and theological opinions. It is this second aspect which makes these papers specially valuable. For though each of the writers is putting forward no more than his personal view, he in fact represents the opinion of a large group. Thus the questions formulated by Tolen are being asked by the whole Third World. Weth, in stating his belief that only in Christ can there be salvation, is affirming a view held by the main stream of Christianity. Stendahl, finally, speaks for all those who put

a question mark against this traditional, exclusive view of the function of Christ.

Aaron Tolen

The preparatory meeting in April 1972 had pointed to the concept "community of communities" as one of four areas which needed further clarification. In his paper "The concept of 'community': between identity and solidarity" Tolen addresses himself to this task. He approaches his subject more from the sociological than the theological side. Analysing the idea of community, he differentiates between a community of sentiment and an organic community. A community of sentiment is one formed by a particular group, i.e. one held together by a common religion, race or culture. A nation, on the other hand, is an organic community. Thus every organic community is made up of a number of communities of sentiment, as experience and sociology show. Tolen's intention in making this distinction is clear; by this means he is able to get into focus the tension between identity and solidarity. Man finds his identity in his community of sentiment, but if that is not combined with solidarity to the organic community in which he equally lives, that identity will be a divisive factor, making for tribalism or sectarianism. It is clear that Tolen here speaks from his own African experience. The right to self-determination, as the justified expression of the identity of a particular group, he maintains, is limited by the necessity of its integration into a larger community. The converse is equally true. It is the problem of dual loyalty which looms large in his thinking. Behind this stands his concern for a world community based on the solidarity of all men, and his fear that more particular and personal attachments, be they tribal, racial or religious, will detract from this universal solidarity.

This is the background against which should be understood the three questions he put to the Jewish participants and which were felt to form the thrust of his paper. Is Israel, so he summarized his first question in the discussion, a state like any other state, which — just as any other — also includes minority groups (or, in the terminology used in the first part of his paper, communities of sentiment), which it has to respect? In his own words: "Can there be any basis for the position that only a certain class of citizens, practising a certain

religion and having adopted this religion, can be full citizens of the country?" His second question, addressed to those Jews who live in a non-Jewish country, asked them where their primary loyalty lies, in the Jewish community or the state of Israel, or rather in the state of which they happen to be citizens. Thirdly, he asked whether the Jewish community in general and the state of Israel in particular are so concentrated upon their own identity that there is no place left for solidarity with non-Jews. To quote his words: "Must they be considered as the only ones that 'will never mix with others'?" For if that were the case, how could they then still be allies in the fight for a world community and against *apartheid*?

It might be argued that these questions show that Tolen has not really understood the peculiarity of the Jewish people as it understands itself. Tolen would be the last to deny that. At one moment he seems to regard the Jews as a race, at the next as a religious community. But that does not detract from the fact that the questions he poses are real questions, which are being asked by many people in the world. They therefore demand a clear and unambiguous answer, one which will take into account the new situation in which the Jews find themselves today. For their life is no longer determined primarily by the diaspora but by the existence of the state of Israel. The observation, made from the Jewish side in the ensuing discussion, that different loyalties (e. g. to one's wife, one's mother, one's country) can exist side by side without any conflict, true as it is, does not really meet Tolen's "perplexity", as he called it. It would in any case be entirely unjustified to take exception to his questions as being polemical accusations. That misunderstanding can only arise if they are taken out of context and if it is forgotten that the problem of dual loyalty is a very real one for Tolen himself, who wishes both to assert his own African identity and at the same time to contribute to a real world community. It is certainly significant that in his paper he should compare the Jewish predicament with that of the Blacks, who today are running the risk of an "anti-racist racism" with its concomitant of "exclusivism".

Rudolf Weth

The difference between Weth's paper "The dialectic of particularity and universality from the standpoint of Christian theology" and

Tolen's is very marked. It is all the more noticeable because the subjects they are dealing with are not far apart. The problem of identity and solidarity, of which Tolen spoke, is essentially the same as that which Weth denotes by the terms particularity and universality. But while Tolen approaches his subject sociologically, Weth's paper offers a closely knit theological argumentation and shows a high degree of theological sophistication.

There are two clusters of questions with which Weth deals. The one — to him, I believe, the more important one — centres around the universality of the Church, the second around the secular community. I will deal with them successively, though in Weth's paper they are more closely interwoven.

There seems to be an age-long conflict between the Church, which in its missionary zeal claims to have a message valid for all men, and Judaism which rejects that message and refuses to give up its separate particularity. Renouncing the "aggressive universalism" of the Church, Weth tries to solve this conflict by putting all the emphasis on Jesus Christ rather than on the Church. Only in Christ do absolute universality and the utmost particularity coincide. He is the chosen one, the one Man with whom God has fully identified himself; that is Christ's particularity. But this particular election has all men in view, for this is "God's self-determination towards communion with all men"; that is Christ's universality.

This universality and particularity of Christ throws light both on Old Testament Israel and on the Church. "The particularism of ancient Israel" writes Weth "is not to be reckoned as an instance of the particularity of the nations... Basically, it is to be understood as the mystery of salvation-history at work in the history of the world." And the Church in its universality is not to be understood as being the realization of the all-embracing kingdom of God, for "exclusive and universal reality exists solely in the Crucified, and one day in the messianic future of Christ." The Church merely "corresponds" to this reality. To express that, Weth speaks of the "proleptic universality of the Church", which, as he states, "coincides with its historical particularity". For as it partakes in the universal mission of Christ, the Church will necessarily meet with opposition in this world.

Moreover — and this is the decisive note which rounds off Weth's picture of the relationship between Israel and the Church — the

Church has not taken the place of the chosen people and cannot regard the still existing particularism of Judaism as "no longer justified after the coming of Christ and therefore 'obdurate'". On the contrary, the very particularity and universality of Christ still applies to Israel today, also in its rejection of Christ. For, according to Romans 9-11, "the traditional order of redemption — first the Jews, then the Gentiles — has been reversed by God himself... In rejecting the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah, Israel goes its own self-chosen way. Yet this way is, after all, in a hidden fashion, the special way along which God is leading His people to the universal divine community. The particularism of Israel does not fall by the board; on the contrary, it acquires new meaning."

By thus putting Israel's acceptance of Christ at the end of history or even beyond it, Weth can explicitly reject any mission of the Church to the Jews, while still upholding the belief that only in Christ is salvation. The following words summarize his view clearly: "*Extra Christum nulla salus* applies to all men, and therefore to Israel too. But the very particularity of Israel is a warning to the Church not to falsify this statement to read *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Ultimately only the messianic future of Jesus Christ and his kingdom, which will embrace Israel too, is catholic and universal. The Church's catholicity and universality is therefore provisional; within history it is bounded by the particularity of Israel."

It is to be regretted that because of Weth's absence his paper was not really discussed at the consultation. Even so it was clear that the replacement of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* by *extra Christum nulla salus* did not make his eschatology any more acceptable to Jewish thinking. Moreover, as long as an exclusively christocentric point of view is maintained, the plea for dialogue instead of mission, as was made in Weth's paper, will be suspect to the Jews as being no more than an alternative method of evangelizing them.

It was, I suppose, also due to his absence that Weth's controversial point about the separation between the state of Israel and Judaism was passed over in silence. The unique particularity which Weth allows to Judaism he denies to the state. For, he maintains, if Judaism were absorbed into the state, it would lose its identity and become no more than "the political religion of a state". To understand his position on this point one has to turn to that part of his paper in which he deals

with the secular communities. Speaking of world community he uses the term "utopia"; not, I think, to disqualify it, but rather to express by his very terminology his conviction that "we must distinguish strictly between the universal kingdom of God and the utopia of a world community to be achieved by men". But his paper does not really deal with this world community, nor with its relation to the eschatological kingdom. It has more to say about national communities. Their character in history is ambivalent, because national particularities make on the one hand for "aggressive divisions of mankind", but are on the other hand a positive element. Nations can have "an integrative and constructive function" in helping people to discover their identity, they can serve as political guardians of minorities in supranational blocs, and they "can contribute to the manifold richness and to the opportunities open to the whole of mankind".

It is especially this last aspect which is important, because of its abiding character; the differences between the nations will not simply be done away with in the ultimate fulfilment. Therefore, while rejecting a hostile separation between the nations, the Church can accept them in all their diversity. It cannot, however, accept in the same way other religions and various world-views, for they will have no place in God's kingdom. To quote Weth: "Only at the expense of its own identity could Christianity abandon its fundamental, but also exclusive and particular experience of fellowship between God and man in Christ." That does not mean that the Church should plead for the suppression of these other religions or for a so-called Christian state. Confessing the exclusive sovereignty of God, the Church is "a brotherhood free from all domination" in which men can have no sovereignty over each other. A state, however, cannot exist without power and the domination of man over man. Therefore, Weth argues, the Church "will be resolutely in favour of pluralism, in view of a coming world community", or, in other words, it will opt for the neutrality of the state. This is for Weth not only a matter of expediency but of theological necessity. In view of the above it is no longer surprising that he objects to any identification of the state of Israel with Judaism. One might only wonder whether, in considering Judaism in purely religious terms, and the state of Israel in purely secular ones, he is not obscuring the special peculiarities of both.

Krister Stendahl

The contribution of Stendahl was given in the form of a number of theses which he elaborated orally, on the question proposed by the preparatory meeting: "How can we work together with people of other religions in the quest for a world community?" Though his subject might seem to be rather different from Weth's, both were in effect wrestling with the same problem: how in a pluralistic (world) society can the universalist claim of Christian faith be maintained without doing violence to the Jewish community? In contrast to Weth, Stendahl gives a major place to empirical observation. He points thus to the fact that religion has been more a divisive than a unifying factor, indeed, that "the triumphalism of religious communities is the main road block on the way towards a community of communities". This highlights the issue of power. Stendahl is outspoken at this point, asserting that God always stands on the side of the weak, so as to overcome the imbalance of power. "Strength and chosenness do not mix well." When in the discussion this dictum was attacked from the Jewish side, he qualified it by pointing out that he had spoken as a white American, belonging to a group which is very much up in the world, and that he fully realized that a majority group does not have the right to call a minority group to powerlessness.

But the main problem for Stendahl, as for Weth, lies in the apparent incompatibility of the Christian belief in the universality of Christ with the beliefs of other faith-communities. An incompatibility all the more vexing for him because he sees this as one of the greatest obstacles to the realization of world community. In order to move beyond it he observes that there is no reason whatsoever for the Church to believe that the whole world will ever become "christianized". Early Christianity, he says, "envisaged a distinct minority drawn from many nations and peoples, but still a minority, that would serve God as salt of the earth and as light to the world." Liberated thus from the necessity to make the whole world Christian, the Church might well consider whether the Jewish model of witnessing to the one God by obediently serving Him might not be preferable to the more "arrogant" model of "conquering" the world by "imperialistic" mission. All these words were used by Stendahl in his spoken account of his theses.

At first sight Stendahl's substitution of the term "Christian witness" for "mission" or "conversion" might seem identical to Weth's substitution of dialogue for mission. There is, however, a decisive difference. Because Weth states emphatically that fulfilment is only in Christ, his plea for dialogue will carry with it the suspicion that its ultimate goal is the conversion of those of another faith. Stendahl, on the other hand, remains content with knowing less about the ultimate consummation and with respecting more deeply its mystery; "only God knows the plan and the consummation." He too is certainly convinced that Christians can "only" offer their faithful witness — which will by its very nature always be witness to Jesus Christ. But who can say whether for God there may not be other ways open to bring men to salvation than through Christ? In the ensuing discussion Stendahl appealed to Paul, who says that finally Jesus too will be subjected to the Father. (I Cor. 15:28). Ultimately there remains only the glorious affirmation of the one God, who is the Father of all mankind. Because of this *docta ignorantia* Stendahl's witness to Christ appeared to be acceptable to the Jewish participants of the consultation in a way Weth's was not. As a matter of fact, his view seems to agree with what according to Professor Talmon is Israel's ultimate vision: "the unison of particular men and particular people who worship the 'One most high'", each in the context of his own faith. Moreover, Stendahl offers a basis for conversation with people of other faiths than the Jewish, which Weth, by giving Judaism an exceptional position vis-à-vis Christianity, does not. The great question, which was not discussed at the consultation but which, I believe, will have to be taken up by Christian theologians, is whether Stendahl's view, over against the more traditionally christocentric one, as it was expressed by Weth, can be defended on biblical and dogmatic evidence.

Robert Martin-Achard and André Dumas

The papers of Martin-Achard "Some remarks on the actualization of the biblical teaching of social justice", and Dumas "The biblical matrix and our present social responsibilities", address themselves to the fourth area indicated at the preparatory meeting as requiring further investigation. It is to be regretted that neither of them received appropriate attention at our consultation. That was due, I

believe, to the fact that their subject matter, though extremely relevant to the formation of world community, lies rather outside the scope of the other papers. The circumstance that no Jewish counterpart paper was offered may also have played a role.

Martin-Achard develops one single point: that the actualization of the Bible is a process, witnessed to and postulated by the Bible itself. Following von Rad, he argues that the Old Testament (as an Old Testament scholar, and probably also in view of this particular consultation, he concentrated upon that) is made up of groups of traditions, in which the people of God expressed their faith ever anew, on the basis of the testimonies of former generations while taking into account the ever new situation of their own time. Hence there is an ongoing "re-reading of tradition", determined by the two poles of fidelity to the past and openness to God's demand in every new situation. This openness to the situation entails that the Bible is always remarkably concrete: it "eschews general, changeless truths which are applicable in all places and all times". Martin-Achard substantiates this fundamental thesis by two examples. In the so-called "temple discourse" Jeremiah pleaded for the surrender of Jerusalem and submission to the king of Babylon (Jer 7: cf. 26). Thereby he seemed to disavow Isaiah, who in earlier times had called for trust in God and had announced the failure of the siege of Jerusalem (Isa. 7). But between the time of Isaiah and that of Jeremiah the relation between God and his people had changed. Isaiah, in the 8th century, could still believe that the people of God had a future before it, if only it would be faithful to the covenant. Jeremiah, however, knew that the people had not repented and that now the hour of judgment had come; he therefore admonished them to accept the calamity which God was bringing upon them. This example shows, as Martin-Achard points out, that being faithful to the past does not mean the repeating of words or traditions of an earlier time, for by mere repetition "yesterday's truth (might be transformed) into today's falsehood!" "There is an ostensible loyalty which is deceptive and leads to disaster, while there is also a genuine attachment to tradition which consists in discovering, for the present moment, the right way of restating it and of making it once more the guide of life."

To show how freely and relevantly the Bible speaks, Martin-Achard takes Amos as another example, who in his fight for social justice did

not shirk responsibility or indulge in generalities. Indeed, he appears to have been remarkably well informed. In fierce and precise language he castigated the rich who had no regard for the rights of the poor. Nor were there any *a priori* taboos from which Amos recoiled. Fearlessly he attacked the generally accepted religious practices and beliefs which had become an alibi for perpetrating injustice.

Martin-Achard's conclusion is: "Today as in earlier times, we have to try to be faithful to the biblical tradition while taking cognizance of the problems of our own time." In order to fulfil this task we need both a thorough understanding of the message of the Bible and a realistic analysis of the present day state of the world. For "the prophets put us on our guard against a tendency to take refuge in readymade solutions, where we confine ourselves to repeating yesterday's truths, blind to the fact that history ... is on the move."

Dumas' shorter paper is as it were complementary to that of Martin-Achard. While the latter begins with the biblical witness and then asks how this former tradition is to be re-interpreted today, Dumas follows a more inductive and apologetic method, conscious of the fact that it can no longer be taken for granted that the Bible is relevant today. This applies especially to present day thinking on social ethics, "which is based on sociology and on ideology far more than on convincing and effective theology". In order to show that also in our time the Bible is not "anachronistic", Dumas first analyses four contemporary social themes, and then points to certain biblical thoughts which have something to say about these. For it is Dumas's conviction that the events related in the Bible are, in their very concreteness and contingency, representative and illustrative for events of all times. As he states it: "the real task of biblical social ethics is to throw light on our present situation by *analogy* with the concrete examples recorded in the Bible."

It would have been interesting to see whether papers by Jewish participants would have turned out at all similar with respect to biblical hermeneutics. One remark made in the discussion, namely that Martin-Achard's paper lies in the line of the Torah and the way the Pharisees understood it, seems to be promising for future cooperation. The members of the consultation felt that one of the areas which requires further research and discussion is this question of the actualization of biblical teaching. If at a future meeting this were to be

taken up, it might well appear that the vital dividing line would cut across the two communities of faith. Maybe it would appear at a point which was alluded to but not followed up in this discussion: is it *we* who have to actualize the Bible, or does the Bible, as it has sunk into the unconscious of the believing community, actualize itself time and again?

towards world community

Krister Stendahl

I

The quest for and the necessity of a "world community" impress themselves upon us all at this point in world history. Thus we are rightly asked to search out what resources there may be in our faiths for such a quest, resources that may be latent or even suppressed or neutralized in our respective traditions.

For the record of history shows clearly that religions have actually often been more a divisive than unifying force in human world affairs. So strong and striking is this negative record, that we must honestly ask whether a quest for world community really is intrinsic to our faiths. It is not enough to surmise that religions "of course" are a power for peace in the world, and then blame divisive conflicts on the inabilities of the believers to live up to the high ideals of their respective faiths.

It is well known that political and economic conflicts become more vicious when wedded to religious diversifications. Religious wars are the most vicious of all wars. It also seems that the religions for which history is the stage and vehicle of revelation are more susceptible to such tensions in the world community.

In the light of history it would be hypocritical for the religions to offer their unscrutinized resources as the great aid and hope toward world community.

On the other hand, the power of religions is strong and well attested as a force towards identity. In their faith human beings easily find and express their identity, their humanity, their place in the universe, their

calling. And their faiths become a bond of shared experience and shared identities. Just as I cannot imagine human beings apart from their religiousness, as *homines religiosi*, so I cannot envisage either individuals or the world without communities of faith. If such communities express and even create tensions, I must first affirm the indispensable character of the communities of faith and then ask the theological question about how such diverse communities might fit into God's plan for the whole world, be it in a community of communities, or in a mysterious coexistence where the identity of each community is so expressed that it is aware of its own limited role within God's total scheme of things.

It is perhaps worth remembering that the local cults of the ancient Near East hailed the "local god" of the city or the land as the creator of the whole world. Then universalism was intrinsic even to the most local cult. Each local temple was also the "navel of the earth", the *tabor*, the *onphalos*. And this archaic and primary religious experience was not hampered by its logical problems. Is there already there a pointer towards and a model for world community in all religions?

II

The Christian and Muslim communities have tended to think that the world community under God is to be achieved by conquest, be it by military or missionary means. The Jewish community has had a very different model. Here the Creator of the world has called Israel to witness by its life, obedience and existence to the Oneness of God and to the moral order. In this witness they are to be "a light to the nations" (Isa. 49:6), to be used by God as He sees fit in his work with and for his creation. Here is a witness that leaves the results in God's hands, a witness without the urge to make others into one's own image. It is a model for a distinct minority, without expectations of becoming a majority. It is what I would call the Witness Model, as over against the Missionary Conquest Model.

In our pluralistic society and in our shrinking world with its need for interdependence, this Jewish Witness Model may well deserve serious consideration by all religious communities, including Christianity. As a Christian theologian and as a student of the New Testament, I am increasingly aware that the early Christians at no point envisaged

the Christianization of the world. That obvious observation is not obviated by a reference to the short-term eschatological perspective of their faith. It is rather grounded in a continuity with Israel as the light to the nations, as the salt of the earth, as the witnessing community. The universalism of the Christian Church is real, the church is a new community with universal participation, not limited to the Jewish people. As such, this community with disciples from all nations (Matt. 28:19) is a new outburst of the witness to God's will, and it is grounded in the faith in Jesus Christ. But its function remains that of a witnessing community, leaving the results to God. It remains a minority, now drawn together from many people. It does not envisage the Christianization of the world.

It is striking how Paul, the most eager of missionaries, comes to criticize the feeling of superiority over against the Jews that he detects among his converts (Rom. 11:20) and how he reaches the to many astonishing conclusion that God may have other plans for the salvation of Israel than he, Paul, had envisaged earlier in his missionary zeal. For God's plan is a mystery and cannot be secularized into the potential success of Christian missions. "Lest you be wise in your own conceits, I want you to understand this mystery..." (11:25)

Thus I think it possible to approach the quest for world community as distinct, non-imperialist, witnessing communities. Our thoughts as to the possible results of our witness must be held in check by a growing feeling of mystery, lest they become secularized into spiritual triumphalism. Is that why Paul — consciously or unconsciously — does not use the name Jesus Christ for a couple of pages as he reflects on the mystery of Israel's salvation? For there is no such use from Rom. 10:17 (where some manuscripts read "God") to 11:36, and the whole passage ends with a hymn to God whose wisdom and knowledge is beyond our calculations.

III

What are then the "resources" of our communities of faith? Our Scripture, our traditions, our histories, our inherited wisdom. But we are burdened by our awareness that these resources have only too often hindered rather than helped our communities when it came to the issue now at hand: the way towards world community. Could

we possibly detect a reason, a factor, a flow that accounted for such a miscarriage of peace and justice amongst us? Could it be shown that religious traditions, the use of scriptures, religious identities without a living relation to God, without prayer, meditation, listening for the Word here and now—that religion without God is not only dead, but positively dangerous, destructive and demoniac? The Jewish zeal for God's transcendence is to the point here. No "images" — not even theological systems — should be allowed, lest we think that we have God in our own hands, at our disposal for our own purposes.

The "fear of the Lord" — the awareness that we are God's and He is not ours — is that the remedy by which our communities of faith open up to a new and more upright common quest for God's whole plan for the whole world? I think so.

IV

It could and should be argued that the search for world community cannot skirt the issues of power. And it may well be that especially Jews and Christians together should consider whether their Scriptures and their traditions contain some special insight and perspective for such a quest. Not least since a great part of Jewish history in the West has been plagued by a Christian community in the position of power and majority over against the Jews.

Let me try to sketch one such possible perspective: In the drama of history God places his grace, his power, his election on the side of the weak, the oppressed, repressed, depressed. In so doing, He compensates for the imbalance of power in the world. We hear of the chosen people when it is beleaguered, threatened, exiled, in danger of extinction. But when the people fall back on their chosenness while they enjoy worldly power and wealth, then Amos tells them that the Day of the Lord, the day of judgment and consummation will be darkness and doom, not light and salvation. Chosenness and power do not mix well. God's grace, Lord's mercy seems to be his built-in bias in favour of the weak, the needy. The last shall be the first, and justice *is* salvation, *is* grace, for those who are wronged. That seems to be the criterion of biblical ethics. It is also a key to world community, especially in a time when *the* issue is the redistribution of resources and human dignity so unjustly distributed in a starving world.

But the ultimate "resource" is and remains the living God and living faith in Him. He who says God knows that God transcends everything, including his statements about God, and including his community of faith. Therefore, the world somehow rightly expects women and men of faith to be an asset towards world community. And — all historical evidence to the contrary — the believers know that that expectation, that hunch of the world is correct.

joint proposals

At the request of the Jewish-Christian Consultation in Lugano, October 1970, a group of Jewish and Christian scholars met in Geneva in April 1972 to discuss the theme "The quest for world community: Jewish and Christian perspectives". At the end of the meeting the following joint proposals were formulated:

I

The present world situation is characterized by increasing interdependence. Mass communication from continent to continent brings close to us the concerns of millions of people of whose existence we were hardly aware before. Mass travel helps us to become acquainted first hand with ways of life and thinking which in the past were hardly known to us. Economic, technological and political developments draw the people of this world more closely to one another. This development raises acutely the question whether mankind will be able to create a world community which allows for life in justice and peace.

The realization of such a new order is not optional. It is decisive for the future of the human race. "One world ... or none" is more than a slogan. However, the concept of interdependence of mankind is ambivalent. It may hold out the promise of new community but we also know from bitter experience that human institutions are not always unmixed blessings, no matter how noble the intentions of their founders, and may even lead to new conflicts of unprecedented dimensions. Groups can overreach themselves and destroy others. Nations can and do make war, and one world may be dictatorial or soulless.

When speaking of world community we do not think of an imposed

uniformity throughout the world — ideological, cultural, political and religious. We feel that world community needs to be understood as community of communities. The identity of each group must not be extinguished, but each must find its place in the wider community of communities. Only such a concept provides the hope for the development of a human future in which individuals and groups will have their rights respected and their dignity inviolate.

The way to realization of world community is barred by many obstacles. We mention only a few factors which need realistically to be taken into account:

1. The abdication of social responsibility by individuals.
2. The loss of a sense of history and continuity by contemporary man.
3. The traumatic diminution of the sense of human dignity — man's meaning and worth — in this technological era, with the resultant breakdown in interpersonal and intercommunal relationships.
4. The division of the world by racism, competing power blocs and antagonistic classes of the advantaged and the disadvantaged, such that the latter are permanently frozen in their deprivation with the only recourse being revolution and social upheaval.

It is imperative that our two faith communities apply themselves in common to devising the ways and means of remedying these problems. The Jewish and Christian communities both are aware of this challenge. They have in the past not been sufficiently sensitive and open to those outside their own circles. Yet we feel that our world views are such that our communities have to respond sympathetically and creatively at this moment of history if they are to be true to their respective heritages.

These traditions are specific for each faith community. Judaism reverences the Hebrew Bible, but it is by no means restricted to it. In its long history, it drew upon the Bible and creatively applied its teachings to each generation and its problems within a developing tradition. The matrix of Christianity is the Christ event, which is witnessed in the New Testament and cannot be understood without the Old Testament. In course of time, each tradition has learned to reinterpret itself and reformulate its world view in critical response to new phenomena, conditions and challenges.

Starting from different points of origin, the two heritages have yielded certain understandings and insights that are of the most

crucial significance for human history. These concepts, not adequately realized heretofore, include the dignity of man and his freedom, which issue from his creation in the divine image, and his responsibility for his fellow man under God. It is our conviction that such ideals which our communities share are deserving of renewed commitment and implementation by the two of us as part of the human family for the betterment of all mankind. It is up to us to create an atmosphere in our communities conducive to the implementation of these principles in concert with other faiths.

II

The two study groups agreed that the following are some of the subjects requiring further investigation by the constituent groups and the plenary conference. The first, third and fourth subjects have not been considered in depth because of lack of time. The second has been discussed but the groups have not been able to reach agreement on a common statement.

1. We have used the terms "world community" and "community of communities" in this paper. These terms must be properly defined and conceptually analysed before they are used in a final statement.
2. The dialectic relation of universality and particularity is differently conceived by the two groups. These differences must be spelled out and clarified.
3. How can we understand and work together with communities of other religions and ideologies in their quest for a world community based on their own resources?
4. How can we contribute to the actualizing of the biblical teaching of social justice in cooperation with communities of other religions and ideologies, and in addition to, or in conjunction with, governmental and international agencies?



Implementing the recommendation in the above mentioned proposals that further deliberations be held to clarify outstanding questions of major significance, the two groups reconvened in Geneva in December 1972 and presented papers on several of the questions assigned to them. The following represents the major points that were made in the papers and the ensuing discussion:

1. In speaking of world community we do not mean mere interdependence of men and nations. We intend rather an order that enables

communities to live together creatively in justice and peace and for our mutual enrichment. It is not a perfect community but a viable way of sharing the possibilities and responsibilities of human existence. Thus, we do not speak of world community as an ultimate goal but as a proximate goal. Both Jews and Christians — as well as other religious and ideological communities — have ultimate goals for the future which are not necessarily identical. There is the messianic age and the Kingdom of God. *God* will bring about the reign of love and justice. These hopes will inspire our lives and actions and our modes of responsibilities with regard to our more proximate goals.

2. World community as a viable order for today's world should be conceived as a community of communities. World community is not only the sum of individual human beings; it is composed of communities of diverse kind and of a variety of societal structures, some natural, some historically and culturally determined, some freely contracted (e.g. ethnic, linguistic, religious, political). Individuality can be expressed through membership in various communities. World community must recognize the value of such communities as they provide human life with identity and meaning and work towards overcoming the threats of loneliness, anonymity and uniformity.

3. States, too, should regard themselves as the protectors of equal rights of all their component communities. This understanding of the state as it has emerged in modern times is to be welcomed and affirmed. If the state is regarded as absolute in the name of an ultimate value it becomes a danger to rather than an instrument of world community.

4. We found helpful the distinction between particularity and particularism. Particularity does not exclude the legitimate concern of a community for its rights as long as it does not ignore the rights of others. By particularism we mean the self-interest of a community which is exclusive in that it ignores the rights of other communities and disregards the interests of world community. Particularism because it does not contribute to solidarity with the larger community is detrimental to world community. World communities should be aware of the dynamics of historical developments and the emergence of legitimate demands which may affect their own rights. The distinction between particularity and particularism cannot be drawn

in a final static way. Each community must be open and responsible for the rights of other communities and the whole of mankind.

5. Both Jews and Christians are bound to emphasize the value of particularity in world community. We think that this emphasis needs to be understood as a contribution to world community because insistence on particularity emphasizes the insistence on the respect for the rights of other particularities. Mutual respect is the basis of world community. This emphasizes the access to power of the as yet powerless and a readiness to change mentalities and structures which are impeding the access to power and the fulfilment of identity.

6. Religions have often been a hindrance rather than a contribution to the building of world community. Today's situation calls into question in a special way the exclusiveness which may have characterized the traditions in the past. Any form of triumphalism must be rejected. The contributions Jews and Christians are able to make to world community must be seen in the wider context of the contributions other religions and ideologies are striving to make. The dialogue between Jews and Christians is as yet still too restricted to the western world. Therefore, they must be particularly sensitive to the wider context and make the effort to contribute to the mutual understanding between people of all persuasions.

7. Obviously many areas require further research and discussion. Some of the areas mentioned are:

- a) the understanding of election and its bearing on the life of the community;
- b) the role of the state and its relation to its component communities;
- c) the role of power in the mutual relation of communities, in particular the understanding of power in both traditions;
- d) the actualizing of the teaching in both traditions for social action;
- e) the sharing of spirituality;
- f) further clarification of the term community and the mutual relation of "communities of diverse kinds".

list of participants

World Council of Churches — International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations

Geneva, December 11–14, 1972

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